

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the Irish Mathematical Society**
Annual General Meeting
3rd September 2010

The Irish Mathematical Society held its Annual General Meeting from 15:30 to 17:00 on Friday 3 September at Dublin Institute of Technology. There were 16 members present at the meeting.

The meeting began with a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Alexei Pokrovskii, Professor of Applied Mathematics in UCC, who had recently died.

1. Minutes

After correcting a minor typographical error, the minutes of the last AGM were approved and signed.

2. Matters arising

13: Daphne Gilbert informed the meeting that the overseas student whose case was highlighted at the last AGM is not being charged fees by DIT at the non-EU rate as originally feared. The SFI however has not changed its position regarding funding of non-EU students.

Colm Egan is the winner of this year's Fergus Gaines Cup. It was suggested that the cup could be presented at the same time as the Hamilton Prize.

3. Correspondence

The British Library, as a copyright library, has sought copies of the Bulletin. Gordon Lessells informed the meeting that five copies are sent to Trinity, four of which are supposed to be sent to the other copyright libraries, including the British Library.

4. New Members

Ciaran Mac an Bhaird (NUIM); Eabhnat Ni Fhloinn (DCU); Joe Gildea (Sligo IT); Edwin O'Shea (UCC); Stephen O'Sullivan (DCU); Paul Smyth (DIT); Georgi Grahovski (DIT); Fiona Murray (DIT); James Gleeson (UL); Noel White (Wicklow VEC); Rossen Ivanov (DIT); Roman Sedakov (student, UL); Carlos Arguez Garcia (student, DIT); Peter Fennell (student, TCD); James B. Gillespie (student, TCD); Garrett Greene (student, TCD).

A rule change concerning membership of the society was proposed: that members near retirement of at least 10 years' standing be given life membership. However this was generally felt to be rather generous compared to what other national mathematical societies offer, and to have a possibly detrimental effect on the Society's finances, so the proposal was withdrawn.

5. President's Report

Following conversations between the President and Cathal McCauley of IReL most of the resources that were in danger of being cancelled have been restored.

The scheduled EMS meeting in Bucharest was cancelled due to the Icelandic volcanic ash, which would have affected many attendees. R. Higgs also decided against attending the EMS Council in Sofia as he considered it to be too expensive to be worthwhile.

The President stated that we should increase our conference support and expand our activities.

6. Treasurer's Report

In the absence of S. Breen (who sent her apologies) S. Wills presented the Treasurer's report for 2009. It showed a shortfall of €580.46.

He informed the meeting that about half of the Society's members haven't updated their standing orders to reflect the recent increase in membership fees. Moreover there are relatively few new members compared to retired members, which may increasingly pose a challenge to the Society's finances. Finally many members have failed to pay anything for several years. It was accepted that members who have not paid membership fees in over three years would have their membership terminated, as provided for by the constitution.

7. The Bulletin

The Editor, M. Mathieu, informed the meeting that Volume 65 of the Bulletin was ready for distribution, and contained for the first time some colour pictures and even sheet music.

He was thanked for his invaluable long-standing contribution to the Society by editing the Bulletin over the years. Thanks were also extended to his successor, Tony O'Farrell for agreeing to take over as Editor. The President said that the Society was fortunate to have editors of such high calibre.

8. Election to Committee

The following were elected unopposed to the committee:

Committee Member	Proposer	Secunder
S. Wills (President)	G. Lessells	R. Timoney
M. Mathieu (Vice President)	J. Cruickshank	M. Mackey
M. Mackey	M. Mathieu	G. Lessells

C. Stack agreed to serve another two-year term on the Committee.

As editor from January 2011, Tony O'Farrell will be invited to committee meetings. The total number of years each existing member will have been on the committee as of 31 December 2010 will be: J. Cruickshank (8), R. Timoney (6), N. Kopteva (5), B. Guilfoyle (5), S. Breen (4), S. O Rourke (4), S. Buckley (3), C. Hills (3), A. Wickstead (3), S. Wills (3), C. Stack (2), M. Mackey (1), R. Quinlan (1).

The following will then have one more year of office: S. Breen, S. O Rourke, N. Kopteva, B. Guilfoyle, S. Buckley, A. Wickstead, R. Quinlan.

9. Membership of ICIAM.

The International Council for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (ICIAM) were in contact with the Society, regarding possible associate membership of the former. The cost is currently \$150 per annum. It was suggested that opinions of IMS members be canvassed, possibly via mathdep.

10. Future Meetings

The 2011 September Meeting will take place in the University of Limerick. The 2012 meeting will take place in IT Tallaght. There was some discussion about the timing of the annual meeting, and whether late August, for example, would be more convenient.

11. Issues Related to Second-Level Mathematics Education

There was an extensive discussion on two topics of current interest: Project Maths, and bonus points for higher level Leaving Certificate Mathematics.

Some points made concerning Project Maths (PM):

- A group of IMS Committee members sent a letter to the Project Maths Implementation Support Group (PMISG) with a view to having an augmented role in Project Maths. (S. Buckley)
- PM is not connected with PMISG, but with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). There is already strong third-level representation on the NCCA informing PM. (S. Dineen)
- PM is intended ultimately to reform mathematics education throughout the entire second-level, not merely the senior cycle, so it is best not to judge this year's PM Leaving Certificate papers in isolation. (S. Dineen)
- PM is an attempt to reform second-level mathematics education which is currently unsatisfactory, not least in the way that students learn by rote and depend on routines to answer questions. (A. O'Farrell)
- There are few materials (such as sample papers) available on the internet about PM. (C. Stack)
- The Society should consider inviting members of the inspectorate to explain their position. (B. Goldsmith)
- The prospect of students being forced to think more under the new regime is likely to frighten students, however preferable it might be to the current system. (R. Timoney)

Some points made concerning bonus points for higher level Mathematics:

- One of the main reasons students don't do higher level mathematics is the time required, estimated to be 50% more than other higher level subjects. (S. Dineen)
- However the level of time and effort required for higher level mathematics is not expected to decrease under PM. Mathematics should receive correspondingly more teaching time, but this is a decision of school principals, and is likely to be determined by points (A. O'Farrell)

- Whether bonus points would be a good thing depends a lot on the detail of any proposal; crucially what multiplier should be applied, e.g. 1.4, 2, ...?
- However, bonus points are a prominent issue in the news lately, and the Society should have a clear position on it. (J. Cruickshank)
- Many students are lost from the higher level, because their teachers are not confident about teaching it, and are afraid that the students will fail. (B. Goldsmith)
- We should beware that other organisations are better at dealing with the media.

Following the discussion, the following motion was passed by the meeting, and is now policy of the IMS.

The Irish Mathematical Society supports the introduction of bonus points for higher level Leaving Certificate Mathematics.

12. Any other business

R. Timoney's term on the Committee ends at the end of 2010. Richard was thanked for his service to the Society.

Shane O Rourke
CIT.

These minutes still need to be approved by the next AGM.